MARVEL COMICS GROUP

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the X-MEN

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"..AND NONE SHALL SURVIVE!"

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YOU MUST NOT REVEAL THE INCREDIBLE ENDING TO ANY LIVING SOUL!!

(REMEMBER..WE'LL BE WATCHING YOU!)

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"...AND NONE SHALL SURVIVE!"

THE FAT'S IN THE FIRE *NOW!* THERE'S NO WAY FOR *PROFESSOR X* TO KEEP OUR BATTLE OUT OF THE HEADLINES AFTER ALL *THIS!*

YOUR PULSE IS *IMPOSSIBLE,* SON!

THOUGH THE YOUTHFUL X-MEN MANAGED TO DEFEAT THE DEADLY *SENTINELS* LAST ISH, THEY DID NOT ESCAPE UNSCATHED! WITHIN MOMENTS, A FIRST AID TEAM OF NATIONAL GUARD *MEDICS* REACHES THE SCENE...

MY TROOPS WILL TAKE COMMAND, INSPECTOR! IT'S A MILITARY MATTER NOW!

OKAY WITH ME, GENERAL!

HAVE A CARE, KILDARE! EACH AND EVERY TOE IS VIRTUALLY *PRICELESS!*

I WONDER HOW MUCH *LONGER* THE PROFESSOR CAN KEEP HIS CONNECTION WITH US A *SECRET.*

WE'D BETTER SEE ABOUT GETTING YOU HOME SAFELY, PROFESSOR XAVIER!

DON'T WORRY ABOUT *ME,* OFFICER! MY CAR IS PARKED NOT FAR FROM HERE!

PERHAPS ONE OF THE *X-MEN* WILL BE GOOD ENOUGH TO DRIVE ME BACK TO MY SCHOOL!

COMB THE AREA!! REPORT ANYTHING THAT MOVES! LET'S *GO!*

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STORY: STAN LEE • LAYOUTS: J. KIRBY • PENCILS: JAY GAVIN • INKS: DICK AYERS LETTERING: A. SIMEK

ON BEHALF OF THE ARMED SERVICES, PROFESSOR, I WANT TO THANK YOU FOR YOUR AID! IT WAS MOST ***COURAGEOUS*** OF YOU TO OFFER TO COME HERE AND ADVISE US!

I WAS GLAD TO BE ABLE TO HELP, GENERAL!

HE THINKS OF ME AS A CIVILIAN ADVISER! AFTER ALL, THERE'S NO REASON FOR ANYONE TO SUSPECT THAT I'M THE LEADER OF THE ***X-MEN***!

THERE'LL BE SOME MIGHTY ***RED FACES*** FROM NOW ON, PROFESSOR! ALL THOSE WHO CALLED THE X-MEN MENACES TO SOCIETY WILL HAVE A LOT OF ***APOLOGIZING*** TO DO!

IN FACT, I MYSELF USED TO FEAR THEIR POWER, UNTIL I SAW HOW THEY RISKED THEIR LIVES TO HELP ALL OF US!

DON'T YOU ***AGREE***, PROFESSOR?

INDEED I ***DO***, GENERAL!

THAT'S WHY I DECIDED TO RELEASE MY MENTAL ***HOLD*** OVER YOUR MIND-- SO THE ***X-MEN*** WOULD GET DUE CREDIT!

CAPTAIN, ORDER YOUR MEN TO SEARCH THE RUINS OF THE SENTINELS' FORTRESS!

BE ***QUICK*** ABOUT IT! WE MOVE OUT BEFORE SUNDOWN!

WHAT SUPREME ***IRONY***! THE SENTINELS HAD BEEN CREATED TO DESTROY THE ***X-MEN***--

--AND YET, IT WAS NECESSARY FOR ***US*** TO SMASH ***THEM***-- IN ORDER TO SAVE HUMANITY-- THE HUMANITY THAT ***HATED*** US!

ARE YOU INJURED, PROFESSOR? WE'RE TAKING SOME OF THE ***X-MEN*** TO THE HOSPITAL FOR TREATMENT! IF ***YOU*** REQUIRE ANY CARE, WE CAN--!

NO, I'M PERFECTLY FINE, THANK YOU! I WAS IN THE POLICE HELICOPTER, SAFELY REMOVED FROM ANY OF THE ACTUAL FIGHTING!

I ***SUSPECTED*** THAT ***ICEMAN***, THE ***BEAST*** AND ***CYCLOPS*** WERE INJURED!

PERHAPS ONE OF THE ***OTHER*** X-MEN WILL DRIVE ME TO MY SCHOOL? I WOULD ENJOY GETTING TO KNOW THEM BETTER!

THE ***ANGEL*** AND ***I*** WILL BE GLAD TO DO IT, PROFESSOR!

ATTENTION, BEAST! EXERCISE EXTREME ***CAUTION***! DO NOT REMOVE YOUR MASK! ***ICEMAN***! REMAIN IN ICY FORM! YOUR TRUE ***IDENTITIES*** MUST NOT BE EXPOSED!

MAN! IF ***HE*** EVER GOT AN ***INGROWN TOENAIL***, IT WOULD BE ***ENDSVILLE***!

CYCLOPS! YOU WILL BE RESPONSIBLE UNTIL I REACH THE HOSPITAL!

SECONDS LATER, CYCLOPS, THE BEAST AND ICEMAN ARE SPEEDILY TRANSPORTED TO THE NEAREST HOSPITAL, AS THE ANGEL AND MARVEL GIRL ACCOMPANY PROFESSOR XAVIER TO HIS WAITING SEDAN...

THE PROFESSOR ***HAD*** TO LET US GO TO THE HOSPITAL-- NO MATTER ***HOW*** RISKY IT IS! IF HE PROTESTED, IT WOULD HAVE AROUSED TOO MANY ***SUSPICIONS***!

I'M NOT HURT BADLY EXCEPT FOR SOME BRUISES-- BUT I HOPE HANK AND BOBBY ARE OKAY!

AND SO, THE *X-MEN* LEAVE THE SCENE OF ONE OF THEIR MOST FANTASTIC BATTLES--THE SITE WHERE THE *SENTINELS* WERE BORN--AND WHERE THEY, ALONG WITH THEIR TRAGIC CREATOR, PERISHED--AS THE RESULT OF A MAD DREAM GONE WRONG!

A SHORT TIME LATER, IN A HUSHED HOSPITAL ROOM...

HIS INJURY WAS MORE SERIOUS THAN I *THOUGHT!* HE BLACKED OUT IN THE AMBULANCE, AND THEY CAN'T BRING HIM BACK TO CONSCIOUSNESS!

IT WAS GOOD OF YOU TO STOP BY TO SEE THE X-MEN, PROFESSOR--BUT I'M AFRAID *ICEMAN'S* CONDITION MUST BE LISTED AS *CRITICAL!*

DUE TO THE MUTANT NATURE OF HIS BODY, IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO MAKE AN ACCURATE DIAGNOSIS OF HIS INJURIES!

SO ALIEN IS HE TO NORMAL MEDICAL KNOWLEDGE, THAT WE CAN DO NOTHING BUT KEEP HIM UNDER OBSERVATION--AND HOPE FOR THE BEST.!

I UNDERSTAND, DOCTOR! NONE OF THE USUAL MEDICATIONS CAN BE GIVEN TO ONE WHOSE PHYSICAL MAKEUP DEFIES ANYTHING SCIENCE HAS EVER ENCOUNTERED BEFORE!

EVEN *I*, WITH MY MUTANT *BRAIN*, CANNOT HELP BOBBY NOW! HE IS IN THE HANDS OF A POWER GREATER THAN ANY *HUMAN!*

HE'S STARTING TO *MOVE!* TRYING TO *SPEAK--!*

LOOK OUT! I'LL TACKLE THE SENTINEL! I'LL STOP HIM--SOMEHOW--!

I KNOW I'M THE YOUNGEST--BUT I'LL SHOW THEM--I'LL PROVE THAT I'M EVERY INCH AN *X-MAN!* I WON'T FAIL THEM! I *WON'T...!*

I'LL MAKE THEM PROUD OF ME--THEY *NEED* ME--I--I WON'T LET THEM DOWN--!

HE'S *DELIRIOUS!* NO WAY OF KNOWING WHETHER IT'S A *GOOD* SYMPTOM--OR A *DANGEROUS* ONE!

YOU'D BETTER *LEAVE* NOW, PROFESSOR!

ALL THESE MONTHS--THESE MANY MISSIONS--I'VE *PROTECTED* MY X-MEN! I PRAY THAT BOBBY DRAKE WON'T MARK THE FIRST TIME I'M FACED WITH--*FAILURE!*

WITH HEAVY HEART, CHARLES XAVIER NEXT VISITS HANK McCOY--!

HELLO, PROFESSOR! IS THERE ANY CHANGE IN THE *ICE-MAN'S* CONDITION YET?

REMEMBER, HANK--DO NOT, UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCE, REMOVE YOUR MASK! AND, ANOTHER WORD OF CAUTION--

ACT AS THOUGH I AM MERELY A CASUAL FRIEND! NO ONE MUST SUSPECT I AM ACTUALLY YOUR *LEADER!*

NO, BEAST! HE IS STILL ON THE *CRITICAL* LIST... THE POOR LAD IS *DELIRIOUS!*

THE *BEAST'S* FRACTURES ARE HEALING REMARKABLY WELL! BUT, IT'S A PITY HE WON'T PERMIT US TO REMOVE HIS MASK--AS A SCIENTIST, THERE IS SO MUCH *MORE* I WANT TO LEARN ABOUT HIS PHYSIOLOGICAL MAKEUP!

PERHAPS THE *X-MEN* HAVE GOOD REASON FOR WISHING TO KEEP THEIR TRUE IDENTITIES SECRET, DOCTOR!

--UNTIL MANKIND LOSES ITS UNFOUNDED SUSPICION -- ITS DANGEROUS DISTRUST OF *MUTANTS!*

UNFORTUNATELY, WE HAVE NO LEGAL RIGHT TO *INSIST* THAT HE UNMASK!

IF ONLY WE KNEW WHO THE X-MEN'S *PARENTS* ARE! WE MIGHT LEARN SO *MUCH* ABOUT HUMAN MUTATION!

THEIR *PARENTS!* THE ONE *WEAK LINK* IN OUR CHAIN OF SECURITY! IF ANY DEADLY *ENEMY* OF OURS EVER CAPTURED ONE OF MY X-MEN'S *PARENTS*, WHAT A *HOLD* HE WOULD HAVE OVER US!

HOW TRAGIC THAT SCIENCE MUST BE DENIED OUR FULL COOPERATION BECAUSE OF THE *EVIL* THAT STILL LURKS IN THE WORLD!

BUT, AT THAT VERY MOMENT, NEARBY--

WHAT ON *EARTH* IS GOING *ON* UP THERE??

WOULD YOU MIND LETTING A FELLOW HAVE A LITTLE *QUIET*, PLEASE?

THE *ANGEL* IS CALLING THE AUTOMATIC PHONE-ANSWERING DEVICE AT *X-MEN* HEADQUARTERS--

--TO LEARN IF THERE WERE ANY *MESSAGES* WHILE THEY WERE AWAY!

HE LIFTED THE PHONE INTO THE AIR SO WE COULDN'T SEE WHAT *NUMBER* HE DIALED!

YOU'LL HAVE TO GET *DOWN*, YOUNG MAN! THAT'S AGAINST HOSPITAL REGULATIONS!

HELLO? *WHAT??* HOLY SMOKE--THAT'S THE LAST THING I *EXPECTED!*

I'VE GOT TO NOTIFY THE *PROFESSOR*--FAST!

I'M ALREADY *HERE*, WARREN! I DETECTED YOUR MENTAL AGITATION! WHAT'S *WRONG?* MERELY *THINK* IT TO ME--!

IT'S MY *PARENTS!* THEY CALLED THE SCHOOL! LEFT WORD THEY'RE COMING TO *VISIT!*

THEY'RE WORRIED BECAUSE THEY HAVEN'T *HEARD* FROM ME!

THE *PHONE*-- *QUICKLY!* PERHAPS I CAN *STOP* THEM, BEFORE THEY LEAVE!

MAY I HAVE THE PHONE, YOUNG MAN?

SURE, PROFESSOR! THERE YOU ARE....!

IF THEY REACH THE SCHOOL AND FIND IT *DESERTED*, WHAT WILL THEY *THINK*?? HOW CAN WE *EXPLAIN*?

THEY *MUSTN'T* REACH IT FIRST! I'VE HAD A FEELING OF *DANGER* FROM THERE ALL DAY!

THEN, AFTER QUICKLY DIALING THE ANGEL'S HOME NUMBER--

MRS. WORTHINGTON? THIS IS PROFESSOR XAVIER! I'VE HAD MY STUDENTS WITH ME ON A FIELD TRIP, TO GATHER MATERIAL FOR A RESEARCH PAPER! *THAT* IS WHY YOUR CALL WAS ANSWERED BY AN AUTOMATIC DEVICE!

WELL, *THAT'S* A RELIEF, PROFESSOR! MY HUSBAND AND I WERE QUITE *WORRIED*!

AT ANY RATE, WE'RE PLANNING A SHORT MOTOR TRIP AND THOUGHT WE'D STOP OFF AND SEE WARREN WHILE IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD!

BUT, IT'S *EXAM TIME* NOW--!

OH, WE'LL ONLY STAY A FEW MINUTES, PROFESSOR! SEE YOU LATER! 'BYE NOW!

I COULDN'T DISSUADE HER! BUT, I CAN'T HELP FEELING *UNEASY* ABOUT THEIR VISIT!

WHY, SIR? IS ANYTHING *WRONG*?

YES! WITH ICEMAN CRITICALLY ILL, AND THE BEAST RECOVERING FROM A FRACTURE --PLUS THIS SENSE OF *MENACE* I CANNOT SHAKE--

--I THINK YOU'D BETTER FLY TO THE SCHOOL *NOW*, ANGEL--AND DO A LITTLE SCOUTING AROUND!

I'M ON MY *WAY*, SIR!

IF ONLY MOM AND DAD HADN'T DECIDED TO VISIT THE SCHOOL *NOW!* THE PROF IS NEVER *WRONG* WHEN HE SENSES DANGER--AND I CAN'T LET *THEM* GET INVOLVED IN IT!

I SURE HATE TO LEAVE *BOBBY* WHILE HE'S SO ILL-- BUT, I GUESS THE *PROFESSOR* WILL STAY WITH HIM!

GOSH, IT FEELS *GREAT* TO BE IN *FLIGHT* AGAIN!

THEN, FOR THE NEXT FEW MINUTES AS HE WINGS HIS WAY TOWARDS WESTCHESTER, THE HIGH-FLYING *ANGEL* SOARS AND GLIDES LIKE A FALCON IN FLIGHT....!

NO OTHER HUMAN--NO ONE WHO HAS NEVER POSSESSED *WINGS*-- CAN IMAGINE HOW *WONDERFUL* IT IS TO ACTUALLY *FLY*!

AND SO, THE HIGH-SPIRITED YOUTH STREAKS OVER THE CITY-- LITTLE DREAMING OF THE STRANGE AND STARTLING *MENACE* THAT AWAITS HIM WHEN HE REACHES HIS DESTINATION...

SOMEHOW, WHEN I'M HIGH IN THE SKY THIS WAY, I FEEL THERE IS NO DANGER I CANNOT FACE-- NO PROBLEM I CANNOT SOLVE-- NO ENEMY I CANNOT DEFEAT!!

EVERYTHING SEEMS CLEAN--AND PURE-- AND *RIGHT!* THE WAY IT *OUGHT* TO BE! THE WAY IT *MUST* BE ONE DAY, IF MAN IS EVER TO FULFILL HIS PROMISE--HIS GLORIOUS *DESTINY!*

BUT, EVEN AS THE ASTOUNDING *ANGEL* PLUMMETS EARTHWARD TOWARDS HIS GOAL, THE FRONT DOOR OF PROFESSOR XAVIER'S SCHOOL SLOWLY BEGINS TO OPEN...

ONE OF THEM APPROACHES *NOW!*

I HAD HOPED TO ATTACK THEM ALL AT *ONCE*-- TO DEMONSTRATE MY OVERWHELMING *POWER!*

BUT, PERHAPS IT WILL BE EVEN *MORE* SATISFYING TO DEFEAT THEM ONE AT A TIME! I WILL THEN BE ABLE TO SAVOR EACH INDIVIDUAL VICTORY--TO WATCH EACH ACCURSED X-MAN FALL HELPLESSLY BEFORE ME!

THE *FIRST* ONE COMES! I SHALL CLOSE THE DOOR AGAIN-- AND WAIT!

I WONDER WHAT THE PROFESSOR MEANT ABOUT SENSING DANGER!? THE SCHOOL HAS NEVER LOOKED QUIETER--OR MORE PEACEFUL!

THERE'S NOTHING OUT OF THE ORDINARY *OUTSIDE* THE BUILDING! NOT A SIGN OF LIFE ANYWHERE!

SO I'D BETTER POKE AROUND *INSIDE!* IT'S NOT LIKE THE PROF TO SEND ANYONE ON A WILD-GOOSE CHASE!

THAT'S STRANGE! THE DOOR ALWAYS LOCKS AUTOMATICALLY BEHIND US WHEN WE LEAVE...

...BUT, IT'S *OPEN* NOW!

AND THEN, LIKE A SENSELESS SEQUENCE FROM A MAD, FANTASTIC NIGHTMARE, A HEAVY, LETHAL *BATTLE-AX* SUDDENLY DISENGAGES ITSELF FROM THE STEEL HAND THAT HELD IT, AND HURTLES THRU THE CORRIDOR--RIGHT TOWARDS THE *ANGEL*...!

FLIG!

BUT, LONG, HARD MONTHS OF CEASELESS *TRAINING* PROVE THEIR WORTH, AS THE ANGEL'S AMAZING AERIAL AGILITY SUCCEEDS IN SAVING HIS LIFE!

WELCOME HOME, YOU WINGED BLUNDERER! YOU SHALL NEVER LEAVE HERE AGAIN--UNDER YOUR OWN POWER!

THERE *IS* SOMEONE! BUT *WHO*?? WHO WOULD *DARE*--??

JUST STAY WHERE YOU *ARE*, MISTER! I'LL MAKE YOU *EAT* THOSE WORDS!

HIS VOICE CAME FROM DOWN THE CORRIDOR! BUT, THERE'S NO PLACE TO *HIDE* FROM HERE TO THE END OF THE HALL! HE WON'T ESCAPE ME!

NO MATTER HOW FAST HE IS --HOW *STRONG* HE IS-- I'LL *GET* HIM! I'VE GOT TO BE *SWIFT* AND *SURE*--!

BUT THEN, ZOOMING DOWN THE HALLWAY LIKE A HUMAN MISSILE, THE WINGED MUTANT REALIZES HE'S SPEEDING INTO A *TRAP*-- TOO LATE TO *STOP* HIMSELF!

THERE'S SOMETHING IN *FRONT* OF ME-- IT SUDDENLY DROPPED INTO PLACE--!

I'M GOING TO *HIT* IT! I-- =*UNHHHH!*=

HOW EASY IT WAS TO CLIP THE ANGEL'S WINGS! BUT, HE IS ONLY THE FIRST--ONLY THE *FIRST*!

MEANWHILE, PROFESSOR CHARLES XAVIER PICKS THAT EXACT MOMENT TO CHECK UPON THE CONDITION OF THE X-MEN'S DEPUTY LEADER--

NO, DOC! I'M SORRY! I CAN'T LET YOU EXAMINE MY EYES!

I MUST INSIST, SON! IT'S HOSPITAL ROUTINE! NOW DON'T BE DIFFICULT!

SCOTT NEEDS HELP! I WAS AFRAID OF THIS!

PARDON THE INTRUSION, DOCTOR! MY NAME IS XAVIER! I HAVE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY OF SEEING THE X-MEN IN ACTION, AND...

I'VE HEARD OF YOU, PROFESSOR! PERHAPS YOU CAN CONVINCE THIS YOUNG MAN TO LET ME CHECK HIS EYES! OPTOMETRY IS MY SPECIALTY-- I BELIEVE I MIGHT BE ABLE TO HELP HIM!

NOBODY CAN EXAMINE MY EYES! NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS!

HE WON'T TAKE YOUR WORD FOR IT, SCOTT! YOU'LL HAVE TO CONVINCE HIM--AS DRAMATICALLY AS POSSIBLE! NOW!

THIS IS A MILD EXAMPLE OF WHAT HAPPENS IF MY PROTECTIVE VISOR IS REMOVED FROM MY EYES-- EVEN TO THE SLIGHTEST DEGREE!

GOOD HEAVENS...!

ZAPPT!

YOU MEAN YOU CANNOT CONTROL THE DESTRUCTIVE FORCE OF YOUR EYES?? YOU HAVE TO KEEP THEM SHIELDED ALL THE TIME??

I'M AFRAID THAT'S IT, DOC! IT WOULD BE WORTH YOUR LIFE TO TRY TO REMOVE MY VISOR!

IF YOU'RE THRU WITH YOUR PATIENT, DOCTOR, I WONDER IF I MIGHT SPEAK WITH HIM IN PRIVATE? I WAS ASKED TO BRING HIM A MESSAGE, FROM ONE OF THE OTHER X-MEN!

CERTAINLY, PROFESSOR! THEY AREN'T PRISONERS HERE!

HENCE, A FEW MINUTES LATER...

SAY NOTHING YET, SCOTT! WE MUST BE EXTREMELY CAREFUL TO ACT LIKE CASUAL ACQUAINTANCES, SO NONE SUSPECT MY REAL CONNECTION WITH YOU!

WOULD YOU MIND WHEELING ME TO THAT SHADY ARBOR, MY BOY?

WE'RE ALONE NOW, SIR! WHAT IS IT? IS SOMETHING WRONG?

I'M AFRAID SO! I'VE LOST MENTAL CONTACT WITH THE ANGEL-- AFTER SENDING HIM BACK TO THE SCHOOL!

I SUSPECT SOME DANGER AWAITING US THERE!

ICEMAN IS TOO ILL TO BE MOVED --AND I PREFER THE BEAST AND MARVEL GIRL TO REMAIN HERE IN CASE THEY'RE NEEDED!

BUT, YOU AND I HAD BEST RETURN TO THE SCHOOL AT ONCE! I HAVE A FEELING THAT WARREN NEEDS US!

I'LL GET YOUR CAR, SIR! IT'S PARKED JUST AROUND THE CORNER!

THEN, AFTER AN HOUR OF BREAKNECK DRIVING--!

THERE'S THE SCHOOL AT LAST! HAVE YOU MANAGED TO CONTACT THE ANGEL MENTALLY YET, PROFESSOR?

NO! AND THAT'S WHAT *WORRIES* ME! I SEEM TO SENSE SOME SORT OF MENTAL *BARRIER* AROUND THE SCHOOL --SOMETHING MY OWN MUTANT BRAIN CANNOT PENETRATE!

THE BARRIER IS STRONGER THAN EVER HERE INSIDE! TAKE EVERY PRECAUTION, CYCLOPS! THERE IS SOME GREAT *POWER* BEING USED AGAINST US!

ANGEL! THIS IS *CYKE!* DO YOU *READ* ME? WHERE *ARE* YOU, FELLA?

AH! TWO ADDITIONAL VICTIMS FOR ME! I MUST MAKE SURE THEY DO NOT GET *BORED!*

PROFESSOR-- *LISTEN!* WHAT'S *THAT?!?*

RRRKRREEEEEEE

MY *CEREBRO* MACHINE! THE DANGER IS EVEN GREATER THAN I FEARED!

THE MACHINE SEEMS TO BE GOING *MAD!* THE MENACE MUST BE INCREDIBLY *CLOSE!*

RRREEEEEEEE

I'LL SHUT IT OFF BEFORE IT *DEAFENS* US!

CEREBRO ONLY REACTS THAT WAY WHEN A DANGEROUS *MUTANT* THREATENS! THAT MEANS SOME POWERFUL *HOMO SUPERIOR* HAS INVADED THIS BUILDING, AND IS WAITING TO ATTACK EVEN *NOW!*

HE MUST HAVE ALREADY OVERCOME *ANGEL*--AND WE DON'T EVEN KNOW WHO HE *IS!*

ONLY THE MOST *POWERFUL* OF MUTANTS COULD PREVENT ME FROM MENTALLY REACHING OUT TO HIM! WE MUST LEARN WHO HE *IS*--WHILE WE STILL *CAN!*

PROFESSOR! *BEHIND* YOU!! LOOK OUT--!

IT'S A MECHANICAL MENTAL-WAVE DISTORTER--THE ONE TYPE OF WEAPON I CANNOT FIGHT! IT'S BLACKING OUT MY BRAIN--*I CAN'T THINK*--:OHHHHH!=

I'LL RIP IT *OFF* YOU! NO MATTER *WHAT*, I'LL--:*UNHHH!*=

THWONK!!

A TRANSPARENT *SHIELD!* IT DROPPED DOWN *BETWEEN* US!

SOMEONE'S PLAYING A CAT-AND-MOUSE GAME WITH US!

IN ANY GAME LIKE THAT, IT'S *CYCLOPS* WHO TURNS INTO THE CAT--INTO A POWER-BLASTING *TIGER!*

BUT, NO SOONER DOES CYCLOPS' BLISTERING FORCE BEAM STRIKE THE STRANGE INVISIBLE SHIELD, THAN IT CAUSES AN *EXPLOSIVE BACK-LASH,* WHICH SENDS THE STARTLED MUTANT REELING...!

UHHH--!!

BOOM!

THEN, REGAINING HIS FOOTING ONCE MORE, THE COURAGEOUS YOUTH AGAIN APPROACHES THE STRANGE BARRIER--BUT WITH FAR GREATER *CAUTION--!*

IT'S BEEN PREVIOUSLY PREPARED TO HURL BACK THE FORCE OF MY OWN OCULAR BLAST!

WHOEVER IS RESPONSIBLE FOR IT *KNOWS* ABOUT MY POWER--OTHERWISE HE COULD NEVER HAVE CREATED SUCH AN INGENIOUS *DEFENSE!*

NEXT, WITHOUT WARNING...

THE *LIGHTS!* THEY'VE GONE *OUT!*

THE ENTIRE BUILDING'S BEEN PLUNGED INTO TOTAL *DARKNESS!*

CLICK!

AND NOW, X-MAN, YOU SHALL LEARN HOW TOTALLY *POWERLESS* YOU ARE AGAINST *--ME!*

THAT VOICE-- SOUNDED *FAMILIAR*-- ALMOST AS IF-- =UGGHHH!=

THOK!

WHOEVER YOU ARE, YOU FORGOT THAT MY *FORCE BEAM* IS JUST AS EFFECTIVE IN THE *DARK* AS IN THE LIGHT!

ZAP

OVER-CONFIDENT *FOOL!* I FORGET *NOTHING!*

=OOOFFFFF!=

BEFORE *FINISHING* YOU, I WANT YOU TO SEE HOW *USELESS* YOUR MUCH-VAUNTED BEAM IS AGAINST GENUINE *POWER!*

WHOEVER HE IS, HE SEEMS TO ANTICIPATE MY EVERY MOVE! BUT I'M NOT BEATEN YET-- MY FORCE BEAM STILL HAS PLENTY OF ENERGY LEFT--!

WHEREVER YOU ARE, I'LL *GET* YOU! I'LL BLAST THIS ROOM IN *EVERY DIRECTION!!*

THEN, HAVING DESCRIBED A PERFECT CIRCLE WITH HIS AWESOME POWER BEAM, CYCLOPS TENSELY STOPS-- HOLDS HIS BREATH-- AND WAITS-- LISTENING FOR THE SOUND OF A FALLING BODY-- A SOUND THAT NEVER COMES!

NOTHING! IF HE'S STILL *IN* HERE, HE HAS SOME SORT OF POWER WHICH IS IMPERVIOUS TO MY OWN FORCE BLASTS!

HE MUST HAVE PLANNED THIS WHOLE THING CAREFULLY-- THE ADVANTAGE IS *HIS* NOW--

--UNLESS I CAN REACH THE *LIGHT SWITCH* BEFORE HE STOPS ME!

A NICE TRY, X-MAN, BUT A *FUTILE* ONE! I *EXPECTED* YOU TO RACE FOR THE SWITCH!

WHAP!

KRAK!

AND NOW, IT IS TIME TO *END* THE CHARADE--!

--BY USING ONLY MY HAMMERING *FISTS*, SO THAT YOU *STILL* CANNOT BE CERTAIN WHAT MY *TRUE* POWER IS!

AND, AS THE NOW-HELPLESS CYCLOPS SLUMPS TO THE FLOOR, WE RETURN ONCE AGAIN TO THE HOSPITAL, WHERE WE FIND...

HENRY P. McCOY! I THOUGHT YOU WERE PRACTICALLY AN INVALID!

THAT WAS AN HOUR AGO, MA'AM! YOU KNOW HOW QUICKLY WE MUTANTS RECUPERATE!

NOTHING LIKE SOME CAPRICIOUS CALISTHENICS TO WHILE AWAY A LETHARGIC DAY!

BUT, ENOUGH OF MY EXEMPLARY EPITHETS! TO WHAT DO I OWE THE HONOR OF YOUR SUDDEN VISITATION?

HONESTLY, HANK! CAN'T YOU EVER SPEAK LIKE ANY ORDINARY, NORMAL HUMAN BEING?

I DO, JEANIE! IT'S JUST THAT I EMPLOY MELLIFLUOUS ADJECTIVES TO DO IT!

WOMP!

OH! YOU'RE JUST IMPOSSIBLE!

VERY PERSPICACIOUS OF YOU, WENCH!

AND THEREIN LIES MY CHARM!

VERY WELL, YOUNG MAN! I SHALL HOLD YOU IN THE AIR, TELEKINETICALLY, UNTIL YOU PROMISE TO SETTLE DOWN AND LISTEN TO ME!

PRATTLE AWAY THEN, FEMALE! YOU HAVE MY UNDIVIDED ATTENTION!

WELL! IT'S ABOUT TIME!

HANK, I'M WORRIED! THE PROFESSOR AND CYCLOPS ARE GONE--AND SO IS THEIR CAR! ANGEL IS ALSO GONE--AND THERE HASN'T BEEN A WORD FROM ANY OF THEM!

JUST LIKE A WOMAN!! IF SOMEONE ISN'T FRACTURING YOUR EARDRUMS EVERY CONCEIVABLE MINUTE, YOU BEGIN TO FEAR THAT SOMETHING'S AMISS!

YOU PROMISED YOU'D BE SERIOUS!

I'M SORRY, JEAN! PERHAPS YOU'VE SOME JUSTIFICATION FOR YOUR CONCERN! IT ISN'T LIKE THE OTHERS TO LEAVE US INCOMMUNICADO!

IF THEY WENT ANYWHERE, IT WOULD BE TO THE SCHOOL! PERHAPS THAT SHOULD BE OUR NEXT DESTINATION!

I HOPED YOU'D SAY THAT, HANK! BUT FIRST, LET'S CHECK ON ICEMAN!

STILL NO CHANGE IN HIS CONDITION, DOC?

I'M AFRAID NOT, SON! BUT WE HAVE HIM UNDER ROUND-THE-CLOCK OBSERVATION!

DO EVERYTHING YOU ***CAN*** FOR HIM, DOCTOR! HE'S ***GOT*** TO COME OUT OF THAT COMA!

HE ***WILL*** BE ALL RIGHT, WON'T HE? I MEAN-- YOU DON'T THINK THERE'S A CHANCE THAT HE'LL -- I MEAN--

I CAN'T ***ANSWER*** THAT, YOUNG LADY! HIS PHYSICAL MAKEUP IS SO DIFFERENT FROM ANYTHING MEDICAL SCIENCE IS FAMILIAR WITH, THAT WE CAN DO NOTHING BUT WAIT--AND HOPE!

HE'S ***GOT*** TO PULL THRU! HE WAS LIKE MY OWN ***BROTHER*** TO ME! YOU CAN ***DO*** IT, YOU HUMAN POPSICLE-- I ***KNOW*** YOU CAN!

I KNOW IT'S IMPORTANT TO YOU TO KEEP ALL YOUR IDENTITIES ***SECRET!*** BUT, IF YOU KNOW HIS ***PARENTS***, I SUGGEST THEY BE NOTIFIED --AS SOON AS POSSIBLE!

THEN--YOU ***DO*** THINK IT'S-- VERY ***SERIOUS?!!***

WE'VE DALLIED LONG ENOUGH! WE'VE GOT TO CONTACT THE OTHERS!

IF ANYTHING HAPPENS TO ***ICE-MAN***-- I-I'LL-- OH, I CAN'T EVEN ***THINK*** OF IT!

DON'T THINK OF IT! CONCENTRATE ON THE TASK AT HAND! WE'VE GOT TO REACH OUR HEAD-QUARTERS WITH ALL DELIBERATE SPEED!

YOU--YOU'RE HEADING FOR THE ***OPEN WINDOW!***

NATURALLY! WE'RE ONLY THREE STORIES UP! SUCH A LEAP IS A MERE ***BAGATELLE*** TO THE ***BEAST!***

AND ***YOU*** HAVE YOUR TELEKINESIS!

OF ***COURSE!*** I FORGOT --I CAN FLOAT MYSELF DOWN GENTLY BY MEANS OF MY POWER OF LEVITATION!

AND THAT SAME POWER WILL EASILY LIFT ME OVER THE OUTER WALL....!

AS FOR *ME*, MY METHOD IS SOMEWHAT LESS SUBTLE, BUT EQUALLY AS EFFECTIVE NONETHELESS!

FINALLY, AFTER A SPECTACULAR SUCCESSION OF RUNNING, LEAPING, CLIMBING AND TELEPORTING WITH MILE-CONSUMING GYMNASTIC SKILL, THE TWO MARVELOUS MUTANTS REACH THEIR GOAL...

IT SEEMS SO QUIET--SO FOREBODING--!

STAY ***BEHIND*** ME, LASS! ***I'LL*** CHARGE IN FIRST, AT TOP SPEED, TO BEAR THE BRUNT OF WHATEVER AWAITS US!

BUT, EVEN THE AGILE ***BEAST*** IS NOT PREPARED FOR THE SIMPLE, YET STARTLINGLY DANGEROUS SURPRISE THAT CONFRONTS HIM....!

SOMETHING ***HAPPENED*** TO THE HALLWAY--!

EVERYTHING HAS BEEN COATED WITH A WAXLIKE ***GLOSS***--THERE'S NO ***FRICTION***--NOTHING TO HOLD ONTO--

IT'S LIKE BEING A ***SATELLITE*** IN SPACE--THERE'S NO WAY TO CHECK OUR MOMENTUM--NO WAY TO ***STOP!***

NO MATTER WHAT I REACH--THE WALLS--CEILING--FLOOR--THEY'RE ALL AS SMOOTH AS ***GLASS!***

JEANIE WILL BE ALL RIGHT, BECAUSE SHE ENTERED ***SLOWLY***--BUT ***I*** HURTLED IN LIKE A ***PROJECTILE!***

EVEN MY NATURAL ***AGILITY*** CAN'T HELP ME NOW! I'VE GOT TO KEEP SLIDING ALONG--OUT OF CONTROL--UNTIL I REACH--***WHAT???***

HE'S MOVING SO *FAST*-- EVEN WITH MY TELEKINETIC POWER OPERATING AT FULL INTENSITY, I CAN'T EXERT ENOUGH FORCE UPON HIM TO SLOW HIM DOWN!

IN *FRONT* OF HIM--THERE'S A *DOOR!* IT'S SLIDING OPEN!! IT MUST BE PART OF THE *TRAP!*

STAY *BACK*, GIRL! YOU CAN'T HELP *ME*--BUT THERE MAY BE TIME TO SAVE *YOURSELF!* RUN! *RUN!!*

AND THEN, THE DESPERATE ADMONITION OF HANK McCOY IS DROWNED OUT BY THE SOUND OF HEAVY STEEL DOORS BEGINNING TO ROLL *TOGETHER* AGAIN--!

--*RUN!!*

RRRRRRR

I CAN'T PRY IT OPEN! I CAN'T *REACH* HIM--!!

NATURALLY! THIS IS HOW I *PLANNED* IT!

THAT *VOICE!!* DIRECTLY BEHIND ME! WHO--??

WE MEET AGAIN, MARVEL GIRL! A PITY IT MUST BE FOR THE VERY *LAST* TIME!

YOU!

HOW PATHETIC! DO YOU REALLY FEEL THAT YOUR FEEBLE KINETIC POWER CAN HAVE ANY EFFECT UPON SOMEONE AS SUPREMELY POWERFUL AS *I*?

SO! YOU CHOOSE NOT TO ANSWER ME! YOU PREFER TO KEEP *STRUGGLING* TILL THE *END!* A NOBLE, IF USELESS, GESTURE!

IT'S ALL UP TO *ME* NOW! I *MUST* STOP HIM!! I *MUST!*

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HE'S COMING **CLOSER!!** BUT **HOW??** WHY ISN'T MY POWER AFFECTING HIM?? WHAT'S **WRONG** WITH ME?? WHY DO I FEEL MYSELF GROWING WEAK--WEAKER--?

BY NOW, YOU SHOULD BE STARTING TO REALIZE THAT YOU HAVE BEEN INHALING ODORLESS **SLEEP GAS**, WHICH HAS DULLED YOUR BRAIN, AND HENCE YOUR KINETIC POWER, AS WELL!

THEN **THAT'S** WHY--MY KNEES ARE SAGGING--CAN'T KEEP MY EYES OPEN--SO WEAK--

BUT--YOU HAVEN'T WON--YET! I WON'T GIVE UP--NONE OF US--WILL EVER--GIVE UP!

THAT NO LONGER **MATTERS**, YOU LITTLE FOOL! THE EPISODE IS **ENDED!**

ONLY **ONE** OF YOUR NUMBER REMAINS TO BE BEATEN! AND **HE** IS THE WEAKEST OF ALL!

THUS, THE ERA OF THE X-MEN IS **OVER**--AT LAST!

AND, EVEN AS THOSE FATEFUL WORDS ARE BEING INTONED, BACK AT THE HOSPITAL WE FIND...

THAT'S **YOUR** CALL, JOHN! ANYTHING SERIOUS?

COULD BE! IT MEANS MY FROZEN **X-MAN** PATIENT HAS REACHED THE MOMENT OF **CRISIS!**

DR. THOMAS REPORT TO

YOU'RE DR. JOHN THOMAS, AREN'T YOU? WE'VE SOME **QUESTIONS** TO ASK YOU--!

SINCE **ICEMAN** HAS BEEN YOUR PATIENT, HAVE YOU MANAGED TO "*THAW HIM OUT*" AND DISCOVER HIS REAL **IDENTITY??**

SORRY! NO TIME TO TALK TO NEWSMEN!

NOW HOLD ON, DOCTOR! WE REPRESENT THE *AFFILIATED PRESS,* WE HAVE OVER THIRTY MILLION READERS THRUOUT THE FREE WORLD!

YOU WOULDN'T WANT THOSE THIRTY MILLION PEOPLE TO THINK YOU DIDN'T *CARE* ABOUT THEM, WOULD YOU?

THEY CAN TAKE THIRTY MILLION JUMPS IN THE *LAKE*-- AND SO CAN *YOU!* I'VE GOT A PATIENT IN THERE WHO MAY BE *DYING*-- AND *THAT'S* ALL I CARE ABOUT!

NOW *GET OUT*-- BEFORE I HAVE YOU *THROWN* OUT!

SORRY FOR THE DELAY, NURSE! WHAT'S *WRONG?* WHAT HAPPENED?

IT'S HIS *PULSE,* DOCTOR! IT'S SLOWING DOWN! I-I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO *DO!*

I HATE TO ADMIT IT, BUT NEITHER DO *I!*

THEY *NEED* ME --I *KNOW* THEY DO --THEY *NEED* ME--!

HE'S BEEN *DELIRIOUS* AGAIN --MUMBLING TO HIMSELF FOR HOURS--!

I'VE NEVER FELT SO *HELPLESS* BEFORE!

I MUSTN'T *FAIL* THEM-- NOT WHEN THEY *NEED* ME--!

IT'S ALMOST AS THOUGH HE HEARS VOICES THAT *WE* CAN'T HEAR--AS THOUGH SOMEONE IS *CALLING* TO HIM--DEPENDING ON HIM--!!

PULL YOURSELF TOGETHER, NURSE! HERE'S SOME NEW MEDICATION I WANT--RIGHT AWAY!

IT'S A NEW TYPE OF SULFA DRUG-- VERY *POTENT!* WE'VE GOT TO RISK IT!

BUT, WHAT OF THE OTHER X-MEN? WE HAD BEST RETURN TO THEM *FAST*-- BECAUSE FROM THE LOOKS OF THINGS, THEY MAY NOT BE AROUND MUCH LONGER--!

I REGRET WE CANNOT WAIT FOR THE *ICEMAN* TO JOIN YOU, BUT I FEAR YOU WILL HAVE TO MAKE YOUR FINAL JOURNEY *WITHOUT* HIM!

AND NOW, I'LL MAKE SURE YOU'RE ALL SECURELY *LOCKED* INSIDE YOUR STEEL GONDOLA!

FOR YOUR *OWN* SAFETY, OF COURSE!

WE WOULDN'T WANT YOU FALLING OUT--NOT AFTER YOU REACH *100,000 FEET IN THE AIR!*

SLAM!

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THEN, SECONDS LATER...

YOU'LL ORBIT THE EDGE OF SPACE-- HELPLESS --OUT OF CONTROL--

--UNTIL YOUR SMALL SUPPLY OF *AIR* GIVES OUT!!

AND THAT WILL BE THE *END* OF THE X-MEN-- FOREVER!

WHILE, JUST A SCANT FEW MILES AWAY FROM THAT STARTLING SCENE, MR. AND MRS. WARREN WORTHINGTON BEGIN THE FINAL LAP OF THEIR MOTOR TRIP--

I DIDN'T REALIZE HOW MUCH I'VE *MISSED* WARREN! I CAN'T WAIT TO *SEE* HIM, DEAR!

WE'RE ONLY A FEW MINUTES AWAY FROM THE SCHOOL!

IT WON'T BE LONG NOW!

ONE THING HAS *ALWAYS* PUZZLED ME--- PROFESSOR XAVIER HAS SO *FEW* STUDENTS, I DON'T UNDERSTAND HOW HE CAN AFFORD TO RUN HIS SCHOOL!

I ALWAYS THOUGHT HE WAS INDEPENDENTLY WEALTHY-- JUST KEPT THE SCHOOL FOR A LARK!

ANYWAY, HE IS THE MOST *CHARMING*-- OH! THERE'S THE SCHOOL *NOW!*

STRANGE THAT NO ONE CAME TO THE DOOR! THEY *MUST* HAVE HEARD OUR CAR!

PERHAPS THEY'RE BUSY WITH EXAMS, DEAR!

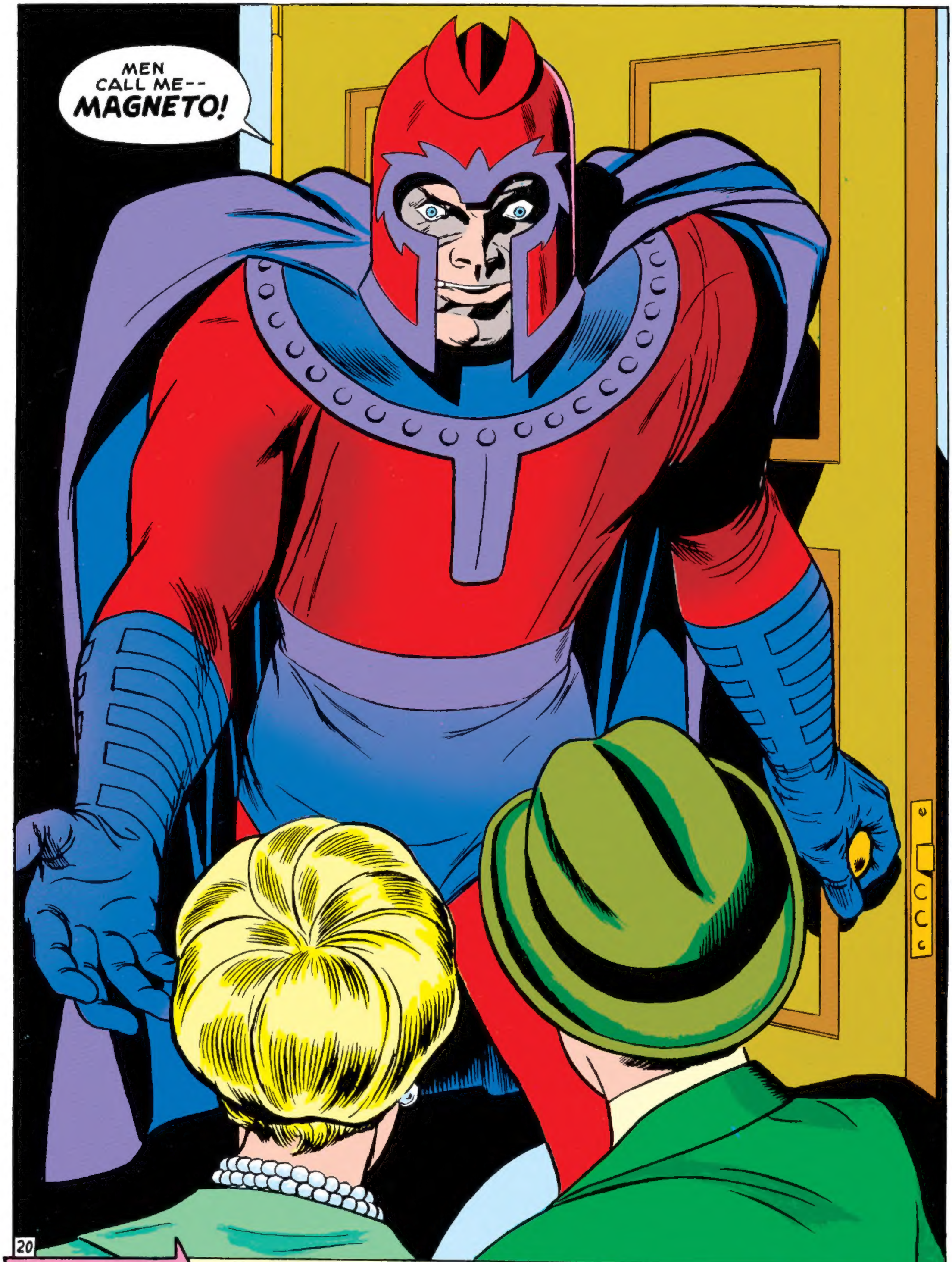
WELL, NO MATTER! I HEAR SOMEONE COMING--!

RINNNG

AH! YOU MUST BE PARENTS OF A STUDENT--!

B-BUT WHO ARE *YOU??*

I? I AM *POWER*--!!



NEXT ISSUE:

THE MOST IMAGINATIVE, UNEXPECTED THRILLER OF THE SEASON--CHOCK-FULL OF WONDERS YOU'VE BEEN ***HOPING*** TO SEE--AND OTHERS YOU NEVER THOUGHT POSSIBLE! WE PERSONALLY GIVE ***X-MEN #18*** OUR HIGHEST RECOMMENDATION--AND YOU KNOW HOW HARD TO PLEASE ***WE*** ARE!! SO BE SURE TO JOIN US NEXT ISH--WHAT GOOD IS A CLASSIC IF YOU CAN'T SHARE IT WITH SOMEONE YOU LIKE?

MINUTEMEN

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